



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## GEOGRAPHICAL REVIEWS

### ARCTIC AMERICA AS A PIONEER BELT

VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON. **The Friendly Arctic: The Story of Five Years in Polar Regions.** xxxi and 784 pp.; maps, ills., index. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1921. \$6.50. 9 x 6 inches.

"There may no longer be a Far West, but there is a Far North with the same nebulous and glamorous future within which shall rise stately cities and empires of productivity." In this sentence from page 670 of "The Friendly Arctic" Vilhjalmur Stefansson summarizes his creed. While others prefer to live farther south and in a warmer climate, a few, including Stefansson, prefer the Arctic. On the same page, one learns that "Mr. Seymour lives in the Arctic rather than anywhere else;" Storkerson prefers it also, and the list is lengthening yearly. If Daniel Boone were alive, he would probably be a denizen of the Arctic. It is the great undeveloped pioneer land of the world. There are vast prairies of grass for the support of reindeer herds and musk oxen, or ovibos, as Stefansson prefers to call them. It is commonly thought that the only useful vegetation of the snow-free surfaces of the Arctic is "mosses and lichens," but Stefansson frequently emphasizes the presence of grass—unused but useful, short but nutritious, snow-covered for a part of the year, but the snow cover is thin.

We are told that the man who goes to the Arctic must use his wits, and we judge from the adventures of Stefansson that he must use his wits constantly and that they must be of exceptional quality if he is to succeed. Thomsen lost his life in a blizzard, apparently, though he stepped away from his snow house only a yard or two. After conferring about the course of the *Karluk*, Stefansson and Bartlett decided to stand off the land at a greater distance at a critical point on the north coast of Alaska. Stefansson found out later that this was a very serious mistake of judgment. Had they stood closer in, the vessel might not have been lost. But the best judgment at which these two experienced Arctic explorers could arrive is acknowledged to have been an error. The results we already know: the *Karluk* drifted westward in the grip of the sea ice and was finally lost; several members of the scientific staff and crew died of nephritis; others who went out to explore the ice never returned; one committed suicide. Out of a total personnel of more than seventy, as listed on pages 758–760, sixteen lost their lives on what is said to be the best equipped polar expedition that was ever organized.

We have referred to Thomsen. His companion was Bernard. After Thomsen's death Bernard advanced farther along the coast of Banks Land. He had access to abundant stores of food separated by moderate distances. All trace of him was lost. It is thought probable that he perished in trying to go forward over the sea ice.

The mistakes of judgment that involve the loss of a number of lives, accidents that result in death, suicides—if one were to become absorbed in these evidences of the unfriendliness of the Arctic one might be led to frame an old-fashioned and convincing story of Arctic hardships and of the impossibility of future development of these now all but empty lands.

Here is where Stefansson shows qualities that we believe no other polar explorer has possessed. He refuses to be stampeded by the dangerous and the romantic. He is not out to make himself a hero. He is studying a problem, and he reports on it. In his way of thinking the Arctic has undeveloped resources, and the resources of the earth are being strained to supply the ever-growing needs of a mounting population. Among the dwindling resources of the world are grasslands. The rise in the price of meat will continue. Nothing can stop it. It is an established economic law. It surely follows that pasture lands of wide extent and that may be grazed by an animal like the reindeer, perfectly adapted to the kind of pasture that the Arctic affords, will not long remain in a state of disuse. Whatever the inconveniences, whatever the dangers, the increasing cost of meat will impel men to exploit the prairies of the North.

It would be a mistake to suppose, however, that the book deals only with the material aspects of the future of the Arctic. To a thoughtful person it is the most fascinating book of polar

exploration yet written in any language—for the story it tells, the breadth of its philosophy, and the style in which it is written. Everything is set forth with simplicity and directness. No one else has written on the Arctic with such charm and lucidity, and surely no one else has so frankly swept aside the romantic phases of his many adventures and coldly analyzed them from the standpoint of ideal achievement. It seems as if every experience was played upon by an ever active mind, intent on getting the inner meaning out of Arctic life and not in carrying home brightly painted pictures of strange scenes and people. It deserves to be ranked among the great classics, like Livingstone's "Travels in Africa," to which it bears many striking resemblances, and Doughty's "Travels in Arabia Deserta," and a few others.

Our first view of a country is always the romantic one. Over the edge of the horizon is something strange. The world wants to hear about it. The audience carries the speaker off his feet. Ultimately the strange becomes better known and must be interpreted, not merely described. It is, therefore, the natural time for such a book on the Arctic to appear. Stefansson will stand for all time—not merely because of "The Friendly Arctic," but also for "My Life with the Eskimo"—as the great interpreter of the North.

Stefansson does not hesitate to blame others for their blunders and failures, but he is no more sparing with himself. It was almost inevitable that there should arise a clamor of criticism regarding his management of the expedition. Obviously it was not closely organized within itself. The several parts were to do work on a semi-independent basis. A wide field had been laid out. Each leader of a party was assumed to be a man who could meet a great emergency. In a too closely organized and minutely directed expedition difficulties arise because specialists are not given sufficient liberty of action. Stefansson chose a wiser and a broader course. He sought to pick big men and put them upon their own responsibility. When difficulties arose he met them in a spirit of concession. Only a broad-minded leader could have taken the course which he took in the face of a threatened mutiny of part of his staff. And later on in his book he gives generous praise to the scientific results of those who had earlier sought to defeat his purposes. Of his courage or of special strength in facing physical obstacles and dangers he makes light at every turn. And while it is true that one recognizes a capacity for physical endurance, the thing that stands out is his power of philosophical thought.

The scientific results of the expedition are to appear in a series of monographs, and an appendix to the book tells of the work of the southern section of the expedition. It is thought probable that the complete scientific results will involve years of further research work and the publication of more than twenty, and possibly thirty, volumes. Several hundred miles of coast line were surveyed, and positions and outlines were corrected; new lands were discovered beyond the northwestern border of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago as previously delineated upon the charts; a scientific study was carried through of the vast copper-bearing rocks on the Arctic fringe of the Canadian mainland; ethnological collections and studies of wide scope and importance were conducted upon Eskimo groups that are still measurably free from white influences. Soundings and meteorological observations were made which extend our knowledge of the ocean floor; the regimen of the currents and the sea ice was studied, and climatic data were assembled. Stefansson himself thinks that it is not the formal scientific results of the expedition that are the most valuable part of it, "but rather the general change in the trend of the world's thought which should follow from a broad consideration of what was done and of how it was all done." "It is not only ignorance but also romance that retreats before the advance of knowledge" (p. 687).

The most challenging thing about the book is its title. A question insists on repeating itself, no matter how coldly analytical one's mood: Is the Arctic really friendly? We have referred to the loss of life on this splendidly equipped expedition. Now there is an occasional suicide in the Temperate Zone. Naturally it may occur in the Arctic. Peary considered George Borup the best man in his party as a pioneer in trail breaking. Though only a boy in years, Borup was a man in physical strength and resourcefulness. With a single Eskimo he made a long hunting journey for musk oxen by moonlight and survived every peril of the North. He lost his life by falling overboard from a motor boat in Long Island Sound! Death is commonly less of a mystery than an accident. If Thomsen lost his life in a blizzard within a few feet of his hut, and he an experienced polar traveler, so do the annals of the pioneer record loss of life from blizzards on the prairies of North Dakota, Kansas, and Nebraska. A freeze following a sudden thaw may cover the ground with ice and cause great loss of life among reindeer that may come to thrive on the Arctic prairies some time in the future, but frosts now and then also kill many of the orange groves of

Florida and southern California. Grasshoppers may devour the crops in Guatemala and the Argentine, and a storm may scatter and destroy a fishing fleet in the North Sea.

What are the distinctive risks of the Arctic? For one thing, in a pioneer region the risk of death is greater than in organized and developed communities. If you break a leg in the Arctic or get typhoid fever there, you cannot call the doctor by telephone or expect him to arrive within the next hour. Not only the pioneer of the Middle West and the Far West but also his wife and children took risks, and many suffered death because of pioneer conditions pure and simple. To that extent the pioneer belt was not friendly. So the prairies of the Far North are to be taken as part of a pioneer zone, where loss of life will be relatively heavy and where friendliness is but relative. It is also true that many people lose their lives because they have not the wit to meet an emergency, but if they truly have not the wit they cannot be blamed for losing their lives. No matter what the sources of a man's thought about it may be, whether in cheap story books or bad textbooks or his own instincts, if he thinks the Arctic is terrible, terrible it is to him, and he can hardly be blamed for it if it drive him to insanity or suicide or only keep him in organized communities where there are kin and so-called comforts and a sense of security. The things that matter in the tendencies of a people are not only the objective facts of their environment but also what they think about the facts. Group behavior is not a good basis for proving that man is a rational animal. The tide will be long in turning to the northern prairies. The Arctic will not be called friendly by the majority of thinking people who read about it even in Stefansson's pages; it is truer to say that the Arctic has been friendly to Stefansson.

#### A SYMPOSIUM ON POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF MEXICO, CENTRAL AMERICA, AND THE ISLANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

G. H. BLAKESLEE, edit. **Mexico and the Caribbean.** Clark University Addresses. x and 363 pp. G. E. Stechert & Co., New York, 1920. 9 x 6 inches.

One of the most practical of the attempts that have been made in the last twenty years to obtain a frank exchange of views between thoughtful people in Hispanic America and the United States is this volume of addresses delivered at Clark University in 1920. The organization of the matter, under the editorship of Professor Blakeslee, is most happy. Four introductory chapters deal with fundamental factors, that is capacity for self-government on the part of Mexicans, the character of the Mexican people, the Indian element, and the question of health. A second section takes up special problems, such as oil, railroads, labor, and reconstruction. A third includes a study of recent conditions, the present revolution, the relation of the United States to Latin America, etc.; and a fourth deals with Central America and the islands of the Caribbean.

The best papers in the book are the first and the last. The Honorable T. Esquivel Obregón, Minister of Finance in the Cabinet of Mexico in 1913 and Lecturer on International Law at Columbia University, has a brief introductory paper setting forth six fundamental facts to support a conclusion regarding the capacity for self-government among Mexicans. For our people it is one of the ablest and most constructive political documents in the English language, because it is entirely frank and it springs from a wide knowledge of human nature as well as from a knowledge of the specific problems of the Mexican people. The last address deals with the subject of Porto Rico. While maintaining an attitude of sympathy with the overlordship of the United States, the author, Pedro Capó Rodríguez, Spanish editor of the *American Journal of International Law*, handles the problem of Porto Rican relations in a thoroughly statesmanlike manner.

These and other thoughtful papers in the volume emphasize repeatedly what might be called the first fundamental fact in a study of Hispanic America—that the point of view of the institutions and the spirit of our people and those of Hispanic America are fundamentally dissimilar. The Latin American people look to the older cultures of Europe to satisfy their taste and manners, their philosophy and their ideals. Contributing powerfully to the fostering of this relationship is the better shipping service to England and France from South American ports, the closer similarity of language, and the European view of the social and political problems of the day. There is a racial difference between us and the people of Hispanic America that is even more nearly fundamental. Our ethical standards are unlike; and, though our political forms are superficially similar, there is